Arizona Invasive Species Advisory Council

Research & Information Management Working Group
Thursday, September 13, 2007 Meeting Minutes

Attendees:
Al Fournier – (U of A Maricopa Ag Center; via teleconference)
Alix Rogstad (ASDM)
Bill Werner (ADWR)
Brian Moorhead (Salt River Project)
Chasa O'Brien (AGFD; Co-lead)
Chris Trask (ANPS; ARC CAWMA)
Ed Northam (Southwest Vegetation Management Group)
Fred Amator (AZ Crop Protection Assoc.)
Glenn Fahringer (Nursery & Landscape Industry; Town of Cave Creek)
Kai Umeda (U of A Cooperative Extension; Co-lead)
Marianne Meding (AGFD)
Stuart Wells (Phoenix Zoo)

Meeting Minutes:

Co-lead Kai Umeda opened the Research and Information Management work group meeting held at the University of Arizona Maricopa County Cooperative Extension office in the Palo Verde Room, located at 4341 E. Broadway Rd, Phoenix 85040, and talked about the objectives for the upcoming meeting which included addressing Management Plan objectives 6 through 9.

Kai requested the work group to review the September 6, 2007 meeting minutes and asked for a motion to approve. Chasa O'Brien offered the motion, seconded by Fred Amator. The minutes were approved unanimously with recommended edits.

Co-lead Chasa O'Brien reviewed the Draft Management Plan she and Marianne Meding worked on, and indicated that they used the minutes from previous meetings to identify recommendations that were added to the draft handed out to work group members for discussion at this meeting.

Ed Northam gave an overview of progress made to date on the funding Objective, indicating that it will be an intensive effort to fully review all of the funding opportunities. He indicated the Center for Invasive Plant Management has a list of funding entities that Ed will copy and hand out to the work group for review. Also www.Grants.gov houses a federal list of granting agencies – this list is comprehensive across all areas of funding including SOC, anything Federal where there is granting. The use of an appendix would assist in giving an overview of the funding opportunities. Perhaps include web addresses in the main document. The main document can describe a granting framework. Ed indicated that many of the grants he reviewed are specific to invasive species at this time. The core opportunities will likely come from invasive species, water

quality, aquatic nuisance species, and the Federal grants list. Water quality associated grants would also be important to review, and Ed requested that anyone familiar with such grant opportunities pass them on to him.

Kai indicated that it might be possible to develop a cross cut budget and gave an example of the OMB (Office of Management and Budget) that he reviewed and indicated that it might be possible for all invasive species related funding to fall under 1 line item. He posed a question to the group as to whether we at the state level could take a similar approach if all agencies and State Departments submitted their funding to a central place that would then be 1 line item. Kai thought this approach may look attractive to legislators. This funding could be used for a Center for Invasive Species (Center). The Council would be responsible for identifying priorities for the Center.

Each organization could submit funding dollars according to the prioritized list of research needs. This approach may assist Agencies in requesting funding based on the prioritized list.

One possible recommendation could be that one of the Center staff individuals would have experience in writing proposals. For example, NRCD folks also have job responsibilities in grant writing. Alternatively, a staff member at an Agency could be designated to be a grant writer. Alix Rogstad commented that a lot of the granting programs are already developed, and those systems should be reviewed and fine-tuned to meet the needs of invasive species rather than trying to reinvent the wheel.

Another alternative to that of providing whole grants to applicants is that the Center might be able to offer match for other grants. This approach promotes coordination between the Center and other organizations and agencies. The center can then direct researchers towards particular grants that are in the area of the prioritized list of research needs. Rather than the Center awarding lump sums of funding, this approach will require researchers to approach the Center to request match funds rather than the Center trying to find funding opportunities. Scoring of proposals can be aligned with the prioritized list of research needs.

Match funding would be comprised of separate dollars to grant to investigators. There is a model with the AGFD Heritage Fund where funding for certain areas is advertised. Other programs also exist whereby an existing pot of money is awarded by a deciding body.

Federal dollars cannot be used for Federal match.

Al Fournier indicated that he will email Federal requests for funding to Kai and Ed to make sure they have the information. Al indicated that the group needs to think broadly because there are some calls out there specific to invasive species, but IPM may also be appropriate, and NRI also has a program. Kai will make sure Ed gets this list.

The NRCS Resource Conservation and Development clearinghouse concept was discussed as a model/example where money is accepted and is also sent back out. Some of the dollars are retained for administrative overhead. The State can't make a gift as per constitution, and has to receive goods in return. The Center could serve as an intermediary by providing match funds; however this can be made difficult because of timing of funding opportunities. Having funding from the State would assist in making the timing issues less of a problem. Such a framework would also assist in getting publications and data returned to the center for information management.

Request Rebecca de la Torre to attend and give a review of the NRCS granting framework.

The group discussed including verbiage in granting requirements that requires recipients to report information, occurrences in a timely manner – these requirements will assist in anticipation and early detection.

The group discussed the need to further address information management and develop recommendations for the management plan.

There is a need for a web site, and someone to take care of a database. Discussion followed regarding how R&IM will interface with the Leadership and Coordination Group.

The group moved on to discuss the feasible and necessary requirements for a Center. In today's age, computers make it possible to create a virtual concept; however, there will be a need to have a couple of dedicated positions if there will be a database administrator and webpage manager.

A question was asked about whether there was a difference between applying for research grants and grants to do on-the-ground work. Will the Council also be involved in Rapid Response issues? And would these be funded from Grants? How will the acquired funding be split up between research, rapid response, and management? For research grants, the end product is an ideal concept, where the other on the ground work will be management directed. There may be competition for funding between the two areas. Who will make these decisions? Would it be best to further the funding and granting opportunities to split them into research vs. on the ground, or both (combined). Some funding opportunities will have specific requirements, some won't.

In some granting opportunities, the difference between research and on-the-ground implementation changes the funding criteria. For example, Access, and LIP funding – on the ground work - requires a larger match.

A prioritized list of research needs can address this and the individuals responsible for identifying funding can use priority 1 and priority 2, and only certain items on the prioritized list get to apply for certain funding opportunities – in other words, base

funding on priority of research needs. Perhaps a recommendation should be made to incorporate this concept into development of the research prioritization criteria.

The approach may also allow for restoration and rehabilitation efforts to be taken one step further.

This approach also allows for a way to determine what percentage of the 'pooled fund' in the form of match will go towards research and treatments each year – and distribution can be flexible based on priorities.

If funding is already available for the work that is in question, then giving more money to that work may not increase the pay-off; therefore, the money could be given elsewhere.

Based on the research and management needs – funding can be identified.

How are the various interests going to be split equitably and who gets to make the decisions? The Council as a body will make the decision on what structure should be recommended. The feasibility and success can be reviewed in a timely manner.

The Council makes policy level recommendations. The Center or a committee would be responsible for determining how funding should be awarded: 1) Is the applicant even eligible? 2) If yes, then the Council or Committee determines who gets awarded the funding.

How would the grant money be handled? There could be two separate operations. This Committee would serve as a facilitator in assisting the applicant being awarded a grant, and serve as an intermediary. The applicant would apply directly to the granting agency and the awarded $$ would <u>not</u> first be awarded to the Center, rather directly from the granting agency to the successful applicant.

On the Web site there needs to be a calendar of upcoming granting opportunities. Also should outline current grants awarded and an overview of the project.

The group then began to discuss the process and mechanism for prioritizing research needs. Compiling a list of research priorities via workshop is a good idea. A broad group of stakeholders needs to be at the table including researchers, managers and end users. The role of the workshop would be two-part. First of all to share ongoing research, monitoring and management efforts, second, while subject matter experts are all present, capitalize on that knowledge to undertake a prioritization method. A call for priorities could also be sent out through mailing lists (Western IPM does this on an annual basis).

Research priorities can then be used to identify priorities for granting. There are other functioning groups in the state and at a regional level that are already conducting invasive species prioritization.

CAPS Survey (Cooperative Agricultural Pest Surveys; deals with urban pests) – The contact person is Mike Wallace. Every year, they apply for USDA APHIS funds for invasive pests we don't have yet that have the highest potential to become a problem. They then apply for grants to do extensive surveys of areas where a pest has the potential to show up. The main focus is on plant pathogens and insects. There is uncertainty as to whether they rule out work with weeds. Weed work is typically addressed through the Plant Diagnostic Network (State and regional).

Clarify in the management plan that Objective 17 would be a 1-time effort.

Combine 13 and 16 into 1 recommendation.

There are a few methodologies for pulling together information – Population viability analysis pulls together resources to assess time to extirpation/extinction for a population. Could turn this model around and assess the length of time an invasive species population is expected to last in the environment and infer impacts from that. PVA is an effective well established model. There are programs and existing organizations that conduct the analysis on a continual basis. The Wildlands group has also done a similar effort regarding weeds. Need to compile efforts on weeds, aquatic, etc to have a comprehensive prioritization effort. The Wildlands approach has a couple of gaps that need to be addressed. It does not have an economic component, and does not deal with potential species, but it is a format to start from. Ed and Alix have been through the Wildlands evaluation process which is available on the SWEMP and SWVMA.org Web sites.

The group decided there needs to be recommendations developed on determining who should be surveyed in order to get species nominations which will in turn be evaluated and prioritized to create the research needs list. There is a need to develop a pool of experts to survey. Add to Objective 14 and discuss compiling a list of subject matter experts, and maintenance of the lists. Send a survey to solicit who will be the pool of experts to survey. Areas that need to be surveyed should include: Agriculture, horticulture, turf, Human Health, Pet industry, Veterinarians (State Veterinarian list), fisheries, fire department (eradicate buffelgrass and other …).

What will the review cycle be? It might be advisable to have an annual conference to discuss invasive species issues, but conduct a bi-annual prioritization process, then identify a task team to identify priorities.

The group continued to discuss an annual vs. bi-annual workshop/meeting. Research reports could be on a bi-annual basis, but other on-going research could also be addressed. Alternate such that one year is updates, the following research reports. There was concern that prioritization needs time to mature and should, therefore, not happen annually. Keep in mind these are priorities for doing research, and the research needs to focus on what's realistic. Annual prioritization of research needs is too often.

In practice, hosting such an event (workshop) has to be staffed, and it's a lot of work, and therefore a bi-annual review would be more realistic. Perhaps a newsletter on the website would fill the void; perhaps a blog would also be possible.

There may be a place for species that are targeted (e.g. quagga mussel) where rapid response is needed. There is a research element to the rapid response in that there needs to be money available for rapid response on a quicker timeline than appropriation can address.

Fred Amator asked what is currently in place for rapid response. For example, the quagga mussel falls under AGFD and Larry Riley is the point person. From a research standpoint, the Arizona Water Institute has funding and is accepting proposals. It was identified that there isn't a strong framework for rapid response in place right now.

The Center could come into play to help determine where the research could enable a management response. The center might be able to generate more funds to address these issues as they come up. A timely funding response will be needed to implement research and management programs → Adaptive management will be needed.

The group discussed that Management Plan Objective 8 still needs to be addressed.

In terms of information management, there is an AZ pest management center coordinated by Al Fournier. NPDN (National Plant Disease Network) is also available. Both entities already have a web site that tie into regional and nation programs. The NPDN network is split into regions, and AZ, through the department of plant pathology and sciences, has Barry Prior who coordinates Arizona's activities. ADA (Arizona Dept of Agriculture) and APHIS feed into the network which puts out a regular newsletter which identifies current disease and insect issues. This approach allows for cross-state information sharing and may be an appropriate model to follow.

Al gave an overview of the Pest Alerts page on Al's web site – the AZ Crop Information Site – APHIS. Al gets information from networks that inform him of current issues. Al can then post information on other sites to promote information sharing. So, in response, Al developed a pest alert page. The Pest Alert page can be used as a resource. There needs to be good coordination of communication among all of the groups who are working on invasive species issues. SPRO letters (information from the state agencies) that Al lists on the Pest Alerts page act as a heads up for potential problems.

There are web sites that are already set up for some groups/organizations. A challenge will be getting good communication and information. If something already exists, there is no need to replace or duplicate. The question is how to address the issues that the existing web site doesn't cover. Should it be expanded, or should another resource be created. Al hires part time help, students to do the updates. To expand would require additional funds and personnel. The question was posed as to whether Al could handle human health pests and stay within his purview of integrated pest – economic,

environmental and human health pests? There is also the possibility of posting links on the website.

Bill Werner asked whether grey literature can be posted as pdf's. The Center could create the electronic pdf's for that information that is not yet electronic.

This would work for information sharing, but not for data collection, management and GIS related needs – Database needs.

Group needs to discuss whether the Center needs to consider taking on the SWEMP database. The group also needs to discuss the Land management and AZ Firemap databases and identify whether an invasive species database could piggyback on these existing databases. The group needs to be careful not to create a beast that will take a great deal of manpower to maintain, and still be able to manage the information. What the Center needs to provide is a place that acts as a clearinghouse for information. How does the Center/Council want to participate in this information management and sharing? Our job is to inform about the efforts that are already in existence. So perhaps this Council should be encouraging information sharing. E.g., post on our website the status of SWEMP. Perhaps the Center doesn't need to create another database. But perhaps the Center could assist in funding existing efforts and provide documentation of where invasive species are observed in the State. The center should not be responsible for the on the ground collection, but needs to be a place where data can be centrally located.

If you simply provide funding for others to continue onwards, priorities change and there are no assurances that those efforts will continue. Having the collection dedicated at the center will ensure longevity and make the information available when it's needed and be comprehensive in nature. Another benefit to have a centralized data repository will assist in providing information when identifying research priorities.

A recommendation was made for group members to review the 2006 report to the Governor.

Kai passed a list that refers to the FICMNEW design. He detailed 3 recommendations and tried to capture pertinent points. This list feeds back into the prioritization process for creating a list of research needs. The process could be very detailed or addressed in a more broad fashion, and may assist in determining the type of research that needs to occur. The list could be used in management plan objective 6 to give reasons for why coordination of research efforts is important, and will be incorporated into the introduction paragraph for the objective and perhaps the process for identifying research needs.

Action Items:

1. Have Rebecca de la Torre attend to talk about the RC&D. Ed Northam will contact Rebecca to see if she can participate in the Sept. 20 meeting on how they function.
2. Chasa will complete the scoring for the prioritization for discussion.
3. Copy of prioritization process from SWVMA web site to assist Chasa
4. Chasa will review applicability of PVA to prioritizing research needs.
5. Identify existing information web sites for linking to the Center website.
6. Are there other aquatic, insect and disease websites out there?
7. Identify individuals of interested parties to be contacted to determine who needs to be surveyed to create the list of species to be prioritized.

Sept. 20 Meeting Agenda Items
➢ Define the role that the center will play in invasive species information management
➢ Find out if Rebecca de la Torre can attend the next meeting and discuss the NRCS granting process.

Meeting adjourned 11:20 am.